

# The Noble County Health Monitor

A monthly publication sponsored by the Noble County Health Department

## Reduce Stress for a Healthier Heart

Stress can be found in many aspects of our lives: everyday deadlines, financial struggles, or the COVID-19 pandemic. Stress can add up and do harm to your health, particularly your heart. With constant stress, you're more likely to have high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and poor sleep. While you can't always limit the amount of stress in your life, you can work on changing how you react to it. The automatic "fight or flight" response that kicks in when you're scared, can cause your muscles to tense, heart rate to increase, and your brain becomes more alert. Luckily, with practice, you can learn to trigger a relaxation response instead. Try these techniques to help you get started. Don't get discouraged if you don't get the hang of it quickly. If one approach doesn't work for you, try something new.

*Meditation.* Find a quiet location with as few distractions as possible. Get comfortable by either sitting, lying or walking. Focus your attention on a specific word or set of words, an object or your breathing. And let distractions, including thoughts, come and go.

*Deep breathing.* Take in a slow, deep breath, let your stomach or chest expand and then exhale slowly. Repeat a few times. Many people don't breathe deeply, but it is relaxing and something you can do anytime, anywhere.

*Guided imagery.* This involves a series of steps that include relaxing and visualizing the details of a calm, peaceful setting, such as a garden.

Getting your mind and body to a place of calm doesn't always mean being still. Other healthy ways to manage stress include doing yoga or any type of slow relaxed stretching, talking to a professional counselor, or meeting up with friends for a brisk walk. Being in nature can be very soothing for some people. Combining de-stressors like these with other healthy habits can go a long way toward strengthening your heart like eating more veggies, fruits and whole grains, and less sodium, sugar and saturated fats, for example. Move your body more. Find exercises you actually love and do them regularly. Get enough good, quality sleep and develop a strong social support system.

Taking care of your heart health is a lifelong journey. You can learn more about heart health from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute by visiting [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov). If you need help finding additional resources to help you cope with stress, talk to a healthcare provider.

February 2022

**February 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Groundhog's Day  
**February 14<sup>th</sup>** – Valentine's Day  
**February 21<sup>st</sup>** – President's Day

Kind words and actions can seem so small, but their effects are truly endless.

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For more health information contact:  
**NOBLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
740-732-4958  
[www.noblecohd.org](http://www.noblecohd.org)

## Low Vision Awareness Month

What is low vision? When you have low vision, eyeglasses, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery may not help. Activities like reading, shopping, cooking, writing, and watching TV may be hard to do. In fact, millions of Americans lose some of their sight every year. While vision loss can affect anyone at any age, low vision is most common for those over age 65. Low vision is usually caused by eye diseases or health conditions. Some of these include age-related macular degeneration (AMD), cataract, diabetes, and glaucoma. Eye injuries and birth defects are some other causes. Whatever the cause, lost vision cannot be restored. It can, however, be managed with proper treatment and vision rehabilitation. You should visit an eye care professional if you experience any changes to your eyesight.

## Teen Dating Violence

Teen dating violence is a big problem that should not be ignored. It's very important that we take steps to stop teen dating violence before it occurs in the first place. Teen dating violence is a common type of intimate partner violence. Although teen dating violence sometimes takes the form of clear physical or sexual violence, that is not always the case. Teen dating violence can be verbal or emotional in nature. The fact that a victim was not physically assaulted doesn't mean that the words and behaviors of their partner aren't harming. Sometimes teen dating violence involves economic abuse. A teenager may be the victim if their partner is stealing from them or otherwise taking advantage of them financially.

### Teaching Teens to Recognize Warning Signs

Understanding the warning signs improve educators and parents' ability to intervene in a timely manner. Teens should be taught to recognize the signs to help prevent themselves or others from becoming the victims. At home, parents can explain to their teens what types of behaviors they should not accept or commit in relationships. In school, lessons about the signs of teen dating violence can be included. A focus on educating teens properly could reduce the rate of teen dating violence by promoting healthy behavior and overall awareness. It's not always clear right away when teen dating violence is happening. Thus, teens, educators, and parents should familiarize themselves with warning signs.

Potential signs include:

- Excessive jealousy or anger
- Insecurity
- Moodiness beyond what is normal
- Pressure to engage in unwanted sexual activity
- Controlling behaviors
- Verbal bullying
- One partner constantly monitoring the whereabouts of another
- One partner consistently blaming the other for problems in the relationship instead of taking responsibility

These warning signs may not always indicate that teen dating violence has already happened. That said, they may still indicate that it could happen in the future if action is not taken to address the issue.

## Sippy Cups and Your Child's Teeth

As soon as teeth appear in the mouth, decay can occur. One of the risk factors in early childhood is frequent and prolonged exposure of a baby's teeth to liquids, such as fruit juice, milk or formula, which all contain sugar. Tooth decay can occur when a baby is put to bed with a bottle. Infants should finish their naptime or bedtime bottle before going to bed. Before and after the teeth come in, clean your child's mouth after each feeding or at least twice at day.

1. Before teeth come in, use a clean gauze pad or soft cloth over your finger. Dip the gauze in water so it is damp, but not soaking wet. Wipe your child's teeth and gums gently.
2. When your child's teeth start coming in, begin to use a small, soft toothbrush. Place the head (bristles) of the toothbrush at an angle along a row of teeth and against the gum line. Brush gently in circular motions. Brushing back and forth can hurt the gums and teeth. Do all sides of the teeth. Finish by brushing the tongue with the toothbrush.

Decay can destroy the teeth of an infant or young child, you should encourage your children to drink from a cup by their first birthdays. Many training cups, also called sippy or tippy cups, are available in stores. Don't let your child carry the training cup around. Toddlers are often unsteady on their feet. Falling while drinking from a cup has the potential to injure the mouth. As the first birthday approaches, encourage your child to drink from a cup. Talk to your dentist for more information. If your child has not had a dental examination, schedule a well baby checkup for his or her teeth.



## National Condom Week

From February 14-21 we celebrate National Condom Week; the perfect reason to talk to those around you about the importance of using condoms to prevent both STIs and unplanned pregnancies. When used correctly, condoms are 98% effective. Using condoms and other barrier methods to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy is an important part of taking care of your health and your partner's health. Many people say they find sex to be more enjoyable when they use condoms because they aren't worrying about STIs or unintended pregnancy. There are many varieties of condoms to choose from: latex, plastic, lambskin, flavored, colored, ribbed, different sizes, etc., to meet the needs of you and your partner. Trying different kinds can be a fun way to help you find what works best for both of you. Always check condoms for the expiration date and possible holes. It's also important to avoid using oil-based lubricants (like coconut oil or lotions) because they can damage condoms and cause them to break. While most condoms prevent STIs from spreading, it's important to note that lambskin condoms do not, and will only prevent unintended pregnancy. Only plastic or latex condoms prevent the spread of STIs.



Available everywhere from bathroom vending machines to drug stores, from health centers to the internet, condoms are a bright spot of accessibility in the world of birth control. In addition to being easy to find, on average they cost only \$1 to \$2 per condom. Many health centers even provide them for free, including the Noble County Health Department. For more information call the Health Department at 740-732-4958 and ask to talk to a reproductive clinic nurse.

## COVID Update

The Noble County Health Department (NCHD) will no longer be posting weekly COVID numbers for our county. This information can be found at [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov) and clicking on the COVID-19 Ohio Dashboard and selecting our county. This website also contains all updated guidance and information regarding the COVID virus and vaccine. NCHD will continue to offer all currently approved COVID-19 vaccines twice a week: Mondays from 10am-5:45pm and Thursdays from 10-3:45. Vaccines will now be given in the building unless other arrangements need to be made. COVID testing is also available by appointment Monday- Friday at either 11am or 2pm. For more information call NCHD and ask to speak with a clinic nurse at 740-732-4958.

## Have an upcoming event?

If you would like it in the monthly health monitor please contact Samantha Hesson at 740-732-4958 or [Samantha.Hesson@noblecohd.org](mailto:Samantha.Hesson@noblecohd.org).

"This Institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider"

## Random Acts of Kindness Can...

- + Increase Happiness
- + Increase Energy
- + Increase Lifespan
- + Increase Serotonin
- Decrease Depression
- Decrease Stress
- Decrease Anxiety
- Decrease Pain
- Decrease Blood Pressure

RAK Week is in February  
Random Acts of Kindness Day  
is February 17